



MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Maryland's Social Services Agency



MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release:

September 10, 2009

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WASHINGTON, CARROLL AND ALLEGANY COUNTIES' LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES HONORED FOR PROGRESS IN CHILD WELFARE

BALTIMORE – Washington, Carroll and Allegany counties' local departments of social services met or exceeded several child welfare goals.

At an awards ceremony earlier today, Maryland Department of Human Resources Secretary Brenda Donald honored Washington County Department of Social Services for helping 34 children find permanent families through adoption, and for reducing the number of children placed in group homes by 33 percent.

Carroll County Department of Social Services was honored for reduced their number of children in foster care by 25 percent, and for helping six children find permanent families through adoption.

Allegany County Department of Social Services was honored for placing 86 percent of their foster children in family settings.

In February of 2007, Donald introduced *Place Matters* - a statewide initiative to find permanent families for foster children, update social work practices and involve families in decisions affecting children in foster care.

In less than two years local departments have shown marked improvements in meeting their adoption goals, reducing the number of children placed in group homes, increasing reunifications, reducing the number of children coming into foster care and increasing the number of children placed in family settings.

“Two and a half years ago, we launched *Place Matters* to reform child welfare in Maryland” said Donald. “We take pride in the progress we’ve made to improve the lives of the vulnerable children and families we serve.”

Directors and other staff from the Allegany, Carroll, and Washington Counties' Departments of Social Services, will receive additional recognition from Governor Martin O'Malley during a reception to be held at the State House on September 17, 2009.